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Statement submitted by Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

The growing income inequality of the past two to three decades has negatively impacted the current social, economic and environmental crises. An Oxfam study has shown that the wealth of the 85 richest people in world is equal to that of the bottom 3.5 billion people. Meanwhile *Forbes* lists the number of billionaires at a record 1,426. The United Nations has acknowledged that $50 billion is lost annually by Africa. The recent realization of the International Monetary Fund is that reducing inequality is not only good but essential for economic growth. It is in this context that we must look at the challenges of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Climate disasters are an important area that requires immediate attention if we want to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The effects of climate change have led to a growing sense of outrage in developing nations, many of which have contributed little to the pollution that is linked to rising temperatures and sea levels but will suffer the most from the consequences. It is an issue of global social justice that needs to be ingrained in the Goals.

People losing their land and livelihoods to big corporations are other challenges for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Sovereign States must protect their citizens rather than allow them to be hostages to transnational corporations. A strong accountability mechanism to regulate the impact of corporations on people and the planet is pivotal. The United Nations should reinstate the Centre on Transnational Corporations instead of partnering with corporations.

Policy recommendations

The organization's policy recommendations are as follows:

- Promotion of decent work for all as a social and macroeconomic policy
- Emphasis on public spending for quality health care, education and sanitation
- Urgent action on universal social protection through a redistributive wealth and tax system
- Gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in all policies, and prevention of all forms of discrimination
- Partnership only with those private sector entities that respect the common good and environmental protection
- Promotion of the participation of civil society in implementing programmes with accountability
- Immediate attention to address climate change by phasing out fossil fuels

Conclusion

The current social, economic and environmental crises are the consequences of the greed of corporations, which are at war with people and the planet. We need an alternative system and a new way of relating with people and the planet beyond gross domestic product.